

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Re-issue Qwest Rio Blanco Hill Communications Site
DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0122-CX

Identifying Information

Project Title: Re-issue Qwest Rio Blanco Hill Communications Site

Legal Description: Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado

T. 4 S., R. 94 W.,
sec. 8, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ and E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 9, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 16, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 17, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Applicant: Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink

Casefile: COC0111150 and COC77394

Conformance with the Land Use Plan

The Proposed Action is subject to and is in conformance (43 CFR 1610.5) with the following land use plan:

Land Use Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP)

Date Approved: July 1997

Decision Language: "To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values." (page 2-49)

Proposed Action

Project Components and General Schedule

Qwest Corporation doing business as (dba) CenturyLink has applied for renewal of the Rio Blanco Hill communications site. Right-of-way (ROW) COC0111150 was authorized on January 2, 1964, under the Act of March 4, 1911. Since the ROW was issued prior to the Federal Land

Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Rio Blanco Hill communications site and associated access road would be re-issued under serial number COC77394. The site (39° 42' 02" North, 107° 57' 04" West) is 100 ft by 100 ft, and the associated access road is 10,740 ft (2.034 miles) long and 20 ft wide. The Rio Blanco Hill communications site contains a total of approximately 5.16 acres. The communications site is a microwave radio repeater. The site facilities include a 20 ft x 25 ft equipment building that is 8 ft tall and a 60-ft lattice tower with two 10-ft diameter microwave antenna dishes. The tower is surrounded by a 32 ft x 40 ft chain link security fence while the equipment building is outside of the fenced area.

No additional disturbance is authorized by this action, and all applicable terms and conditions of the original ROW grant will be carried forward and remain in full force and effect. Qwest has requested a 20 year term.

BLM Required Terms and Conditions to Mitigate Impacts to Cultural and Paleontological Resources

1. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The applicant will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The applicant, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the applicant must notify the AO, by telephone and written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the operator must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
4. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically-important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.
5. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the applicant or any of his agents must stop work immediately at that site, immediately contact the BLM Paleontology Coordinator, and make every effort to protect

the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The BLM or designated paleontologist will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days. Within 10 days, the operator will be allowed to continue construction through the site, or will be given the choice of either (a) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for stabilizing the fossil resource in place and avoiding further disturbance to the fossil resource, or (b) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for mitigating impacts to the fossil resource prior to continuing construction through the project area.

Categorical Exclusion Review

The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, E9: *"Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations."*

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.		X
h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

Interdisciplinary Review

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on 9/22/2015. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional review or remarks concerning cultural resources and special status species.

Name	Title	Resource	Date
Brian Yaquinto	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	10/13/2015
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	9/24/2015
Matthew Dupire	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	10/13/2015
Stacey Burke	Realty Specialist	Project Lead	2/4/2016
Heather Sauls	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	2/8/2016

Cultural Resources: The 2014 state protocol agreement between the Colorado BLM and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) exempts rights-of-way renewals, where there are no upgrades or surface disturbances, from further consideration under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). No further cultural resource work is required for the Proposed Action; however, future upgrades or surface disturbances will be subject to compliance under Section 106 of the NHPA, which may require additional cultural resource inventory, treatment, or mitigation.

Native American Religious Concerns: No Native American religious concerns are known in the area, and none have been noted by Tribal authorities. Should recommended inventories or future consultations with Tribal authorities reveal the existence of such sensitive properties, appropriate mitigation and/or protection measures may be undertaken.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: There are no threatened or endangered animal species that are known to inhabit or derive important use from the project area. Renewal/re-issuance of the communications site would not be expected to have any adverse influence on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife species.

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: There are no special status plants or plant species habitat near the vicinity of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is not expected to have any direct or indirect impacts to special status plants.

Mitigation

1. All applicable terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in the original ROW grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect. No new construction is authorized.
2. At least 90 days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the Authorized Officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. The inspection will

result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material; recontouring; topsoiling; or seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

3. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the operation and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.
4. Any proposal involving additional surface disturbance outside of the existing right-of-way disturbance requires an application to the BLM for analysis and authorization. New stipulations for construction would be applied to projects subject to the regulations and policies existing at the time of authorization.
5. The holder shall monitor all disturbed and reclaimed areas through final abandonment for the presence of invasive, non-native, and/or noxious plant species. The holder will be responsible for eradication of noxious weeds that occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.
6. The holder shall notify the authorized officer at least 60 days prior to non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance in the right-of-way. A "Notice to Proceed" shall be required prior to any non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance on the right-of-way. Any request for a "Notice to Proceed" must be made to the authorized officer, who will review the Proposed Action for consistency with resource management concerns such as wildlife, big game winter range, paleontology, special status species, and cultural resource protection. The authorized officer may require the completion of special status species surveys or other resource surveys. Additional measures may be required to protect special status species or other resources.
7. Pesticide Use Proposals (PUPs) will be submitted to and approved by the BLM before applying herbicides on BLM lands. The PUP will include target weed species, the herbicides to be used, application rates and timeframes, estimated acres to be treated, as well as maps depicting the areas to be treated and known locations of weeds.
8. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.
9. The holder shall construct, install, operate, and maintain equipment in accordance with the Motorola R56 Standards (Release 68P81089E50-B, 9/1/2005, or later applicable version) and/or other applicable recognized industry standards, as determined by the BLM Authorized Officer.
10. For the purpose of determining joint maintenance responsibilities on shared access, the holder will make road use plans known to all other authorized users of the common

access road. Upon request, the Authorized Officer will be provided with copies of any maintenance agreement entered into.

11. The holder shall post the authorization number COC77394, the name, and phone number of the holder in an exterior location visible to the entrance of the building.

Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E9. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

Theresa Walter

Field Manager

02/11/16

Date

Appendix A. Figures

Rio Blanco Hill Communications Site COC77394 T4S, R94W, sec. 8, 9, 16, and 17

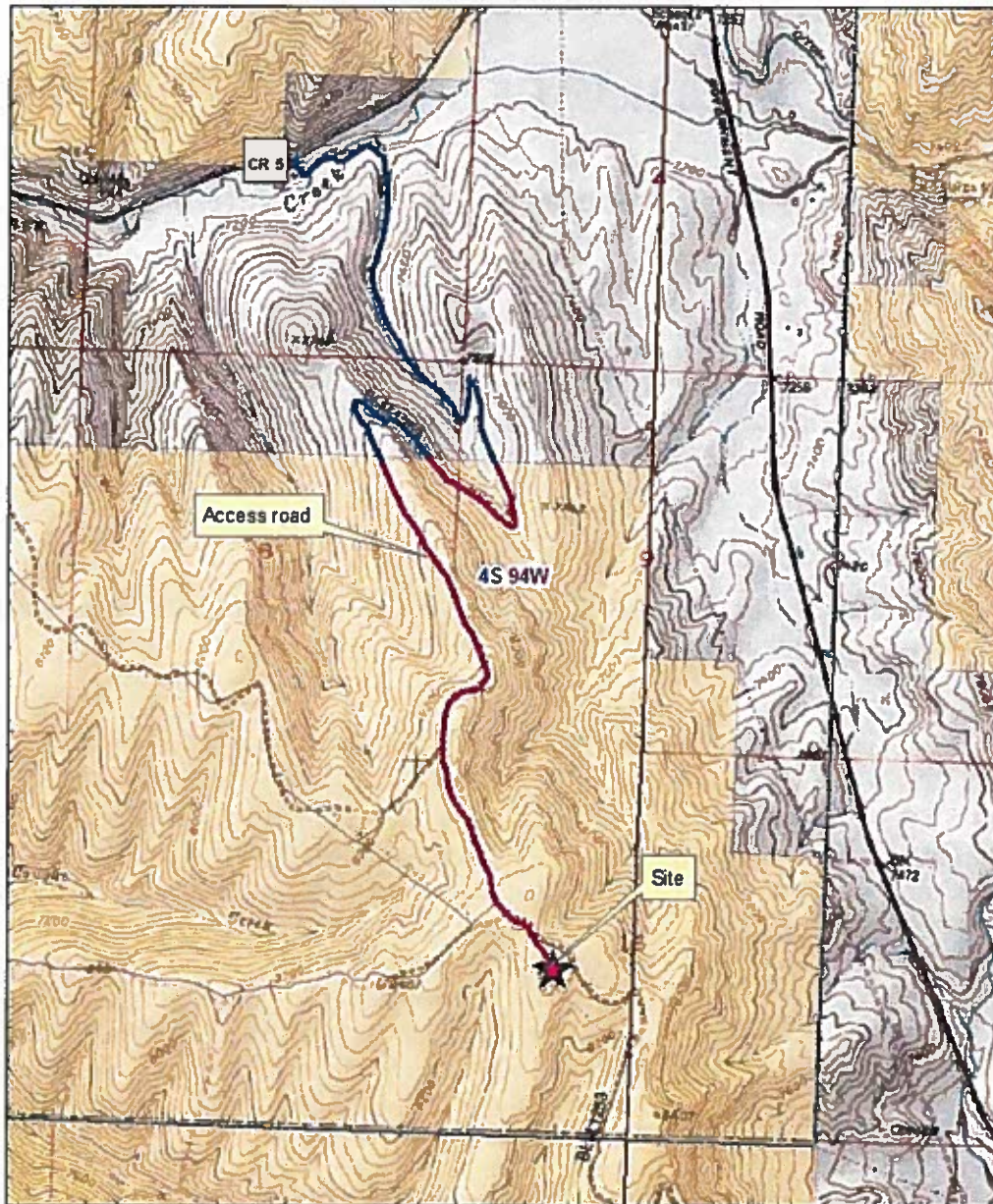


Exhibit A



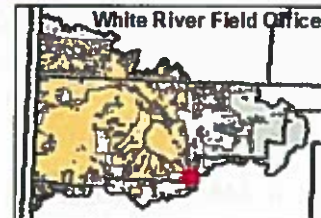
Legend

- COC77394
- Township & Range
- County Boundaries
- County
- BLM
- Other
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private

0 750 1,500 3,000 4,500 6,000 Feet

NOTE TO MAP USERS

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked for current status on any specific tract of land.



Date: 9/17/2015

**U.S. Department of the Interior
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White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641**

DECISION RECORD

Re-issue Qwest Rio Blanco Hill Communications Site DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0122-CX

Decision

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as described in DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0122-CX, re-issuing the Rio Blanco Hill communications site to Qwest Corporation for a 20-year term.

Terms and Conditions

1. The holder is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The holder will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The holder, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
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6. All applicable terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in the original ROW grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect. No new construction is authorized.

7. At least 90 days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the Authorized Officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. The inspection will result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material; recontouring; topsoiling; or seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

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13. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

14. The holder shall construct, install, operate, and maintain equipment in accordance with the Motorola R56 Standards (Release 68P81089E50-B, 9/1/2005, or later applicable version) and/or other applicable recognized industry standards, as determined by the BLM Authorized Officer.

15. For the purpose of determining joint maintenance responsibilities on shared access, the holder will make road use plans known to all other authorized users of the common access road. Upon request, the Authorized Officer will be provided with copies of any maintenance agreement entered into.

16. The holder shall post the authorization number COC77394, the name, and phone number of the holder in an exterior location visible to the entrance of the building.

Compliance with Laws & Conformance with the Land Use Plan

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan.

Public Involvement

This project was posted on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 9/22/2015. No comments or inquiries have been received.

Rationale

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E9. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

Monitoring and Compliance


On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by the BLM White River Field Office staff during and after construction. Specific mitigation developed in this document

will be followed. The holder will be notified of compliance related issues, and depending on the nature of the issue(s), will be provided 30 days to resolve such issues.

Administrative Remedies

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at White River Field Office, 220 East Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 with copies sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet St., Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215, and to the Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals, 801 North Quincy St., MS300-QC, Arlington, VA, 22203. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals at the above address within 30 days after the Notice of Appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

Signature of Authorized Official


Field Manager

02/11/16
Date

